

Oral Questions

Given the seriousness of these allegations, and suggestions that this has been known on the Base for more than three years, does the Prime Minister not believe this warrants an independent investigation outside the Armed Forces?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as soon as this allegation was made public the Associate Minister of National Defence ordered a full investigation by the Special Investigations Unit. They would have the authority and ability to lay charges. If there are any grounds to substantiate those charges, they will be laid.

I am as shocked as the Hon. Member that anyone would claim to have information about this for four years and take some four years before making it public. The Special Investigations Unit will pursue this fully. If there is any basis for criminal charges, they will be laid.

REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, we saw the results of the internal investigation into the RCMP incident where an officer of the Musical Ride was forced to leave that unit after she was filmed in a pornographic way by her fellow officers. Does the Prime Minister not feel that these allegations are serious enough that, to clear the air, we need an independent investigation outside the Armed Forces?

We are talking about allegations that a corporal was involved. We are talking about allegations that a whole Base stood silent for more than three years.

● (1450)

Will the Prime Minister clear the air and appoint an independent investigator outside the Armed Forces to put these allegations to rest or to proceed in a more definitive way?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Special Investigations Unit is from outside CFB Petawawa. If the Hon. Member is suggesting that the Armed Forces would condone or turn the other way—

Ms. Copps: Three years.

Mr. Beatty:—from actively pursuing a case in which rape, a criminal offence, took place—

Ms. Copps: They just did.

Mr. Beatty: If the Hon. Member has any evidence whatsoever suggesting there has been a cover-up by the Canadian Forces of a criminal activity, let her tender that information. Any such activity would be abhorrent to every member of the Canadian Forces and would be a breach of the Criminal Code of Canada. If there is any basis for charges being laid they will indeed be.

FISHERIES

DIXON ENTRANCE—INFRACTIONS BY U.S. FISHING VESSELS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs. Since Dixon Entrance from the AB Line south is listed under Canadian law as our sovereign territorial sea and fishing zone, will the Minister assure the House that it is the policy of the Government of Canada to have enforcement officers on site to board immediately and arrest any U.S. vessel fishing without authority and refusing to comply with the Canadian request to leave the area south of 54:40?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member was very careful in phrasing his question, so I will be careful in answering it. We intend to take the required actions to enforce our jurisdiction.

ROLE OF ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, we know that the West Coast fishing industry was not protected under the free trade agreement. There is growing concern that there is a hidden agenda to the free trade agreement over water, fish, plywood and other items.

Why, on June 22, 1988, were federal enforcement personnel in British Columbia advised in writing that their enforcement and arrest powers had been delegated away from them and away from the responsible Ministers? In fact, they are ordered not to take any enforcement action until so instructed by the legal operations branch of External Affairs in Ottawa, even when they are at the scene of a flagrant violation of Canadian law.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I will determine the answer to that precise question and communicate it to the Hon. Member. However, he is trying to raise a false fear here about the capacity of the Government of Canada, or the willingness of the Government of Canada to enforce our jurisdiction. That is a false fear. Where there is a Canadian jurisdiction, we shall enforce it.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF KENYAN MINISTER FOR FINANCE

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of Members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Professor George Saitoti, M.P., Minister for Finance, Republic of Kenya.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!